

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 09477

E. O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINR, PDIP, MX, FR  
SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC DATA - NEW MEXICAN AMBASSADOR TO  
FRANCE, HORACIO FLORES DE LA PENA

1. IN THE WEEK THAT HAS PASSED SINCE THE ANNOUNCEMENT, THE PUBLIC AND PRESS HAVE RECEIVED IN VIRTUAL SILENCE THE NEWS OF THE APPOINTMENT OF HORACIO FLORES DE LA PENA 53-YEAR OLD ECONOMIST AND POLITICIAN, TO REPLACE CARLOS FUENTES AS MEXICAN AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE. THIS IS SURPRISING IN VIEW OF THE 1) PUBLIC DEBATE THAT HAD BEEN SPARKED BY FUENTES' RESIGNATION IN DISAGREEMENT WITH LOPEZ PORTILLO'S APPOINTMENT OF EX-PRESIDENT DIAZ ORDAZ AS AMBASSADOR TO SPAIN 2) THE CURIOSITY AND PRESS SPECULATION ON POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS TO FUENTES. MOREOVER, FLORES DE LA PENA WAS NOT AMONG THOSE RUMORED TO BE NAMED. HE HAS BEEN OUT OF THE PUBLIC EYE SINCE THE SPECTACULAR RISE AND FALL HE SUFFERED IN THE ECHEVERRIA ADMINISTRATION WHEN HE WAS OUSTED IN 1975 AS SECRETARY OF NATIONAL PATRIMONY (ALTHOUGH THE REASONS WERE NEVER MADE EXPLICIT, OUR INTERPRETATION WAS THAT THE CONFLICT RESULTED FROM FLORES' INTRANSIGENCE REGARDING HIS DESIRE FOR MEXICO TO JOIN OPEC). IN RETROSPECT, HOWEVER, LOPEZ PORTILLO'S SELECTION OF FLORES WAS A MOVE WELL-TAKEN.  
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2. FLORES DE LA PENA HAS BEEN A CLOSE FRIEND OF LOPEZ PORTILLO SINCE 1970 WHEN LOPEZ PORTILLO WAS UNDER-SECRETARY OF NATIONAL PATRIMONY FOR 9 MONTHS. AS SUCH, FLORES DE LA PENA WILL BE ONE OF THE AMBASSADORS WHOM THE PRESIDENT CAN TRUST FOR SUPPORT, AS WELL AS A MODERATING INFLUENCE AMONG THE POLITICAL OPPONENTS LOPEZ

PORTILLO HAS APPOINTED ABROAD IN ORDER TO CONSOLIDATE HIS OWN DOMESTIC CONTROL.

3. FINALLY, THE SELECTION OF FLORES DE LA PENA APPEARS TO HAVE CLOSED THE CHAPTER ON THE CONTROVERSY WHICH BEGAN WITH DIAZ ORDAZ' APPOINTMENT. AND, THE CONCLUSION IS PLEASING TO THE PRESIDENT, BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE MEXICAN LEFT THAT A LIBERAL INTELLECTUAL SUCH AS FLORES DE LA PENA WAS WILLING TO TAKE THE PLACE OF ANOTHER INTELLECTUAL DESPITE DIAZ ORDAZ' PRESENCE IN THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS.

4. BORN IN SALTILLO, MEXICO, FLORES DE LA PENA RECEIVED HIS DEGREE IN 1946 IN ECONOMICS FROM THE NATIONAL AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF MEXICO (UNAM) AND DID GRADUATE WORK AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY. HAVING HELD POSITIONS AT THE BANK OF MEXICO, THE TREASURY, THE NATIONAL CREDIT BANK, AND THE MEXICAN MISSION TO THE UN, FLORES BECAME DIRECTOR OF THE UNAM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS IN 1965. HOWEVER, HE RESIGNED THE FOLLOWING YEAR FOLLOWING AN OPPOSITION CAMPAIGN ORGANIZED BY SEVERAL PROFESSORS. NAMED BY PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA TO BE SECRETARY OF NATIONAL PATRIMONY IN 1970, FLORES SOON BECAME ONE OF THE MOST OUTSPOKEN MEMBERS OF THE CABINET. A STRONG SUPPORTER OF THE ROLE OF STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISES IN THE ECONOMY, FLORES CONTINUALLY AROUSED THE ANGER OF THE MEXICAN PRIVATE SECTOR. IN 1975, HE WAS DISMISSED FROM HIS POST DESPITE THE FACT THAT HIS ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY IS ESSENTIALLY ECHEVERRISTA, AND HE WAS IN FACT REPLACED BY AN ECONOMIST  
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WITH AN EVEN MORE IDENTIFIABLY RADICAL ORIENTATION. FROM 1975 TO 1977, FLORES DE LA PENA HAS BEEN THE DIRECTOR OF THE RECENTLY-CREATED CENTER OF ECONOMIC INVESTIGATION AND EDUCATION, LOCATED IN MEXICO CITY AND STAFFED IN LARGE PART BY REFUGEE CHILEAN ECONOMISTS.

5. FLORES HAS WRITTEN SOME 40 BOOKS, MOSTLY CONCERNING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. HE HAS LECTURED AT HARVARD AND THE COLLEGE DE FRANCE. HE IS MARRIED, HAS TWO DAUGHTERS, AND SPEAKS ENGLISH. THOMPSON

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## Message Attributes

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